

# Fostering Deliberative Discourse in Schools Towards the Constitution of a Deliberative Democracy

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**Abstract:** This symposium focuses on forms of classroom discourse that have the potential to lead to societal change. The deployment of these forms of discourse that we designate as deliberative discourse provides unique moments during which a communicative rationalization is realized. We present very different programs in civic education, science, philosophy or history that realize this communicative rationalization. The common denominator of these programs is that they all provide long-term learning experiences. Through iterative enactment of collaborative inquiry and/or argumentative moves, students acquire norms that prepare them for the constitution of a deliberative democracy.

## Introduction

35 years ago the German philosopher Jürgen Habermas faced the critique of subject-centered reason initiated by Nietzsche and forcefully expounded by the post-modernist movement. Habermas vision of communicative rationalization was further developed by Amy Gutmann as the ideal of deliberative democracy. They saw in argumentative forms of discourse, in which power relations could be made visible and contested, the realization of communicative rationalization.

Engaging students in joint reasoning and resolving of disagreements through argumentation have gained increased attention in education (Schwarz & Baker, 2016). Accumulating evidence shows that structured and socially supported argumentation can produce substantive learning gains in many school subjects and in general reasoning (Resnick, Asterhan, & Clarke, 2015; Wegerif et al., 1999). However, in this symposium, we go beyond the productivity of social argumentation in terms of learning gains to investigate whether and how classroom discourse can realize democratic participation, or in Gutmann's terms instantiates moments of deliberative democracy. In particular, the symposium asks: How can deliberative democracy be conceptualized as a form of classroom discourse? How can deliberative discourse be fostered in school education?

This symposium argues that, unfortunately, in democratic education, a lack of attention to the structuring of social interactions between teachers and students has crucially contributed to a failure of schools to engage students in democratic participation. For example, interaction in school democratic meetings are regularly dominated by a 'control discourse' that effectively delimits students' possibilities to voice opinions and suggestions outside a predefined agenda (e.g. Thornberg, 2010). We will delve into the actual forms of talk that are at the same time productive in terms of learning gains and that realize the ideals of deliberative democracy. Moreover, the symposium argues that deliberative democracy can be fostered in schools by giving students opportunities to engage with complex and controversial topics characterizing democratic social life. Opening up spaces to engage with uncomfortable, current and historical issues triggers emotionally-loaded discussions that, with adequate tools, can potentially be turned to valuable learning experiences.

The five symposium contributions will shed light on how schools can function as sites of deliberative democracy through promotion of diverse forms of deliberative discourse. *Rosé and Clarke* discuss the problem of deliberative democracy in terms of providing students in low-performing urban schools access to a specific form of deliberative discourse, Accountable Talk, in which accountability to reasoning and to knowledge is counterbalanced by the accountability to the other (Michaels, O'Connor, & Resnick, 2008). Rosé and Clarke seek to tackle this problem by instilling Accountable Talk in science education. They developed teachers' use of Accountable Talk as well as series of student-level interventions designed to prepare students to engage in the whole group teacher-led discussions in online CSCL activities and face-to-face activities. *Tammi and Rajala*

illuminate how what counts as deliberative discourse can be renegotiated in unfolding classroom interactions between students and teacher. They present a program that sought to foster deliberative discourse in democratic classroom meetings. They show how the rules of classroom discourse shifted from rules that stress the teacher's authority to more democratic rules. They also show how deliberative communication led to democratic decision making. *Fynes-Clinton and Renshaw* focused on a multicultural school community that participated in collaborative philosophical inquiry (CPI). CPI has been established as the pedagogical method that underpins all curriculum planning, development and implementation at the school. Although the involvement of students in CPI created a more democratic culture in the school, Fynes-Clinton and Renshaw show that inquiry was first based on "paper doubt" rather than on "genuine doubt" where students are authentically engaged in open-ended inquiry for an extended period of time. These expressions of genuine doubts in collaborative inquiry are discussed as expressions of democratic deliberation.

*Solli, Hillman, and Mäkitalo* bring democracy to a place which is generally reserved to elite: scientific controversies generated by technoscientific innovations in a world that relies heavily on digitized information. They show that students can engage in deliberative discourse addressing scientific, societal, ethical and cultural perspectives in issues such as global warming, by using digitized information. The collaborative mapping of these controversies involving tools for navigating support students' engagement in complex issues. *Schwarz and Goldberg* create dialogue spaces in history in a multicultural context on hot issues that usually exacerbate divergences among discussants. Through on-line discussions, Arabs and Jews discuss controversial issues about Modern History of Israel. They show that through a meticulous design, they can harness emotions to productive deliberative argumentation. The fact that deliberative discourse is sustained in long-term learning experiences on very hot historical issues that generally divide these groups indicates that the students are ready for the constitution of a deliberative democracy in a country with presently conflicting identities.

Finally, *Wegerif* provides his reflections on the topic and opens the discussion.

## **Fostering a culture of active deliberation through accountable talk**

Carolyn P. Rosé and Sherice Clarke, University of Pittsburgh

A culture of active deliberation would be one in which students own their reasoning, and thereby see themselves as sources of knowledge and insight within a community of other reasoners. As reasoners within a community of reasoners, students would value both their own reasoning as well as the reasoning of others. A discourse culture of this kind is ripe for inducing cognitive conflict, which can create opportunities for self-reflection and cognitive restructuring. In our story, teachers play a guiding role, but students are the key agents of change. And technology serves as a catalyst for change. We report on a longitudinal teacher development study with the goal of supporting teachers in their work to embed active deliberation through talk in urban schools.

There is growing evidence that teachers can play an important role in fostering and supporting a classroom culture of active deliberation. Specifically, when teachers lead students in classroom discussions where the goal of talk is collaborative sense-making about subject matter, and students are positioned as 'knowers' within these discussions, students benefit in terms of steep increases in learning, long-term retention, transfer across subject matter and the development of reasoning (Resnick et al., 2015). Yet, we find that some populations never get access to the kind of active deliberation that grows the mind and society (Oakes, 1990; Kelly, 2008). Thus, the ideal of deliberative democracy is largely unrealized where it concerns populations of the highest need, e.g., students in low-performing urban schools. In this symposium talk we report on several studies embedded within a five-year longitudinal project that sought to disrupt this pattern by embedding Accountable Talk (AT) in science instruction in an urban school district (Michaels et al., 2008).

In our work, we sought to target populations of teachers that were not yet experts in AT, and work towards developing their use of AT discourse moves. Likewise, we focused on student populations that have not otherwise experienced rich discursive instruction. We conducted a longitudinal design study in an urban school district that had failed to meet national standards for achievement on standardized tests for 5+ years.

The teacher-level intervention focused on developing teachers' use of AT in whole class discussions through professional development workshops and one-on-one coaching. Training focused on how to embed AT in their curriculum, plan a discussion, and engage in AT simulations. In addition to the teacher-level intervention, we developed a series of student-level interventions designed to prepare students to engage in the whole group teacher led discussions. Some of these activities were online CSCL activities focused on collaborative inquiry, while others were face-to-face activities focused on developing reading comprehension skills. We expected these activities to increase student responsiveness to attempts by the teacher to engage them in active discussion and therefore serve a reinforcing effect of the teacher-level intervention. Each of the CSCL interventions were themselves experimental studies (e.g., Dyke et al., 2013; Clarke et al., 2013)

The guiding role of teachers is highlighted in a study of student agency in teacher led whole class discussions. Here we took an in-depth examination of student participation in these discussions to unpack the nature of students' agency (Clarke et al., 2016). Examining the classroom discussions at the turn level to understand what gives rise to students' participation, we found a pattern whereby if a student exercises their agency to participate in discussion, the teacher solicits that student to participate again later in the discussion, and vice versa. This finding suggests a dynamic duality of student agency in discussions: students are responsive to the teacher's guidance, and teachers are responsive to students' agency in discussion. So while students may have general profiles with respect to their participation in discussions (e.g., high participators and low participators) and enacted agency (i.e., highly agentive and marginally agentive), students' sense of agency is not a stable. Students require some support.

While this story suggests an essential role for instructors to keep the discussion active, a further analysis provides evidence of the extent to which even the teacher's behavior is supported by the agency taken by students. Here we recount an analysis of teacher growth in AT appropriation in the experience of one instructor with several of his classes. The students participated in online small group activities facilitated by intelligent conversational agents several times in Years 1 and 2, immediately prior to a teacher-led whole class discussion on the diffusion and Punnett Squares respectively. A conversational agent-as-facilitator must be able to manage several differently-scoped supports and behaviors concurrently. In all three studies, students worked in groups of three to make predictions, discuss observations, and generate interpretations of their observations. Intelligent computer agents supported student groups providing a macrolevel structuring of the task and some level of micro-level support, which in some cases included AT facilitation moves. Across the three studies, we found positive effects on student learning of the agent that engaged in AT facilitation (Dyke et al., 2013).

The most striking result was the effect of the students (returning to the classroom after these activities) on the teacher facilitation of AT. Using growth modeling techniques applied to a series of 57 transcripts coded for the prevalence of AT using an automated technique, we determined that teacher growth was very slow over time, but a spike in uptake of AT was concentrated in lessons immediately following collaborative activities, with an effect size of 1.7 standard deviations. We concluded, that the scaffolding for students' AT in the CSCL environment had an impact on how the teacher intellectually positioned students in the subsequent discussion. Thus the technology served as a catalyst for change and the students as agents of change in the discourse culture of these classrooms.

Thus, students can play a particularly important role in shaping the discourse culture of classrooms towards deliberative, if the teacher creates an opportunity space for students to enact agency in discussions. We count the technology as a catalyst for change, as our evidence shows that intelligent agent support in group activities had a facilitative effect on students' active deliberation in subsequent discussion.

## **Fostering deliberative communication in democratic classroom meetings**

Tuure Tammi and Antti Rajala, University of Helsinki

Research in the learning sciences has established that the structuring of classroom interactions has a significant impact on students' learning (e.g., Resnick et al., 2015). Some research goes further to suggest that guiding students in using talk as a tool for reasoning not only supports their academic learning but can equip them with resources necessary for democratic participation (Michaels et al., 2008). Yet, empirical research on naturally occurring classroom interactions during school democratic meetings shows that the structuring of these interactions counteract attempts to engage students in democratic participation (Thornberg, 2010). These interactions have been characterized as 'control discourse' that feature the teacher controlling the classroom interactions through limiting the students' possibilities to pose questions and through evaluating their responses.

In this presentation, we put the research on deliberative democratic education into dialogue with the research on academically productive talk (Wegerif et al, 1999). We will demonstrate how teachers and researchers can change classroom interactional patterns to foster deliberative communication and democracy. *Deliberative communication* not only involves active listening and resolution of disagreements through argumentation, but also allows the questioning of authorities and conventional views (Englund, 2006). We zoom in on the interactions of one fourth-grade classroom in Finland in which the researcher and the teacher had conducted an intervention to foster deliberative communication over three school terms (2008-2009). We ask: Can deliberative communication be introduced in an elementary classroom? How does the introduction of deliberative communication contribute to students' opportunities to engage in democratic participation?

The intervention was based on action-research methodology through which material artifacts and interactional norms were negotiated with the class. First, the students could communicate their suggestions and initiatives and suggest a format for dealing with these. Second, time was allotted weekly to discuss and decide on

the issues to be dealt with collectively. Third, ground rules for talk were negotiated with the students, following the procedures based on the Thinking Together program (Wegerif et al., 1999), which is a method for fostering academically productive talk. Fourth, the chosen issues were dealt with in the chosen format.

The data for this presentation comprise the video recording of one deliberative meeting in which the class was negotiating and deciding on what to do for a field trip. We decided on the basis of our preview of the videos and earlier analysis of the data that this particular discussion, which occurred in the last meeting recorded in the data set, constituted a rich case illustrating the enactment of deliberative communication in this classroom. The analysis proceeded as follows. First, the video recording was transcribed. Second, to create an overview of the nature of the classroom interactions during the meeting we coded each speaking turn with respect to who was the speaker (teacher/student) and what was its interactional function. Third, we conducted a qualitative interaction analysis of the classroom interaction by comparing its features with the criteria for deliberative communication that emerged from our review of the theoretical literature on the topic. In particular, we paid attention to references to the ground rules for deliberative communication negotiated with the students as part of the intervention. Fourth, we carried out a thematic analysis of the contents of the classroom talk to identify any connections with the students' opportunities for democratic participation.

Our findings show that establishing and negotiating communicative ground rules fostered a shift in the pattern of classroom interaction that enabled the emergence of deliberative communication. Our analysis of the interactions indicated that the students had become acquainted with deliberative discursive norms, and these norms were put into practice to explore personal experiences and interests and to draft collectively acceptable conclusions. The students built on each other's views either by supporting them or constructively refuting them. Disagreements were resolved through argumentation. Moreover, our findings indicate that the introduction of deliberative communication provided the students with new opportunities for democratic participation. Firstly, the students could not only evaluate, support and question each others' views, but also those of the teacher. Like the students, the teacher was also made accountable to the communicative ground rules. Secondly, through deliberation the class explored their relations to social practices in and out of school and made visible the ways in which the broader social conditions posed constraints for them and on the decision making. Thirdly, the students did not only debate the topic but also the way the decision making process was unfolding. Consequently, the decision making was made transparent instead of being treated as given by the authorities or as being beyond alternatives (cf., Thornberg 2010).

There is great potential in democratic classroom meetings to create space and time for students to explore, debate and take action on issues they consider important. The relevance of these discussions reflects the fact that they may help students (and teachers) to reflect upon the complexity inherent in the lives of different people regarding common issues, as well as to question and redefine how they relate to social practices in and out of school. From this perspective, democratic education is not reduced to the provision of knowledge, skills and dispositions, but is a site for the development of political ways of being, doing and seeing that transcend predefined and reproductive categories of what it means to be a student, a teacher or a citizen.

## **Genuine doubt and collaborative philosophical inquiry: Towards a more democratic school culture**

Elizabeth Fynes-Clinton and Peter Renshaw, The University of Queensland, Australia

This paper draws upon an extended design-based investigation (2010 through 2015) into collaborative philosophical inquiry (CPI) in an inner-city primary school that serves a multicultural community in Brisbane Australia. CPI in the classroom is a deliberative, dialogic process that aims to develop complex thinking and prepares students to become critical, creative and caring thinkers and reasonable, active citizens throughout their lives. The first author (Fynes-Clinton) established CPI as the pedagogical method that informed curriculum planning, development and implementation at the school. The CPI approach at the school was based on the original work of Lipman (1980) and later adaptations incorporated by practitioners in the context of Australian schools (e.g., Chesters et al., 2013). Over the past six years, the school had undergone a significant cultural shift in thinking and behaviour. There has been an identifiable lift in students' engagement in learning and academic outcomes as assessed through the national literacy and numeracy program of assessment (NAPLAN). Moreover a recent review of the school in 2015 by an external evaluator identified CPI as playing a key role in creating a more peaceful, caring and respectful community.

This paper examines a particular feature of CPI, namely genuine doubt, which was identified as crucial to episodes of high quality student talk (Hilderbrand, 1996). The notion of *genuine doubt*, was proposed by the pragmatist Charles Sanders Peirce (1877) as key to collaborative inquiry. Peirce maintained that inquiry forms the space between genuine doubt and a fixed or settled belief. Peirce contrasted genuine doubt with 'paper doubt,'

a term he coined to reject Descartes' position on doubt as grounded in the theoretical rather than in practice. Peirce perceived genuine doubt to occur when an action or 'real' experience brings about a feeling of disequilibrium, resulting in one's need to revise an existing belief, thus initiating an inquiry process. Later he reviewed his original ideas about genuine doubt, proposing that philosophical inquiry may commence with 'cultivated doubt' that leads onto genuine doubt. (Hilderbrand, 1996; Pardales & Girod, 2006; Peirce, 1877).

This paper draws upon a corpus of data from specific groups of students which included transcripts of shared dialogue during CPI, student interview transcripts, student artefacts and teacher reflections. Data collection was implemented over two key phases. Phase one commenced with the school's introduction of CPI in 2012 in two multi-age classes: a Year 2/3 and a Year 4/5 class. The key focus of this phase was on the students' development of intellectual habits of thinking and learning that included for example, analogic reasoning, distinction making, justification of viewpoints, criteria building and testing reasoning with counterexamples. The second phase of the study was implemented in mixed year level classes during the second semesters of 2013 (students from years 2 to 7) and 2014 (students from years 4 and 5). The student participants were selected for these classes due to their interest or skill in the learning area of philosophy. Students were introduced to the allegory of Plato's Cave and specific philosophers' theories of knowledge, wisdom, reality, existence and identity. The key focus of the research was students' reconstruction of thinking habits in response to authentic inquiries based on students' questions and connections they made to key philosophical theories (Dewey, 1957). This enabled students to reach beyond the intent of the school curriculum and provided opportunities for the cultivation of genuine doubt amongst the young inquirers. The following is an example of the kind of dialogue associated with an episode of genuine doubt. During this inquiry, the students were considering the possibility that people often fear the unknown and this fear may prevent one from gaining wisdom about the world.

**Year 7 student 1:** As I was listening to everyone it made me think a bit more – and think about having wisdom. I don't think you can be afraid if you have no wisdom because what leads to being afraid is you think about something and that leads to fear – like you are scared of something that you think of – and I think – I – wisdom is the key that can open any door – like if you have wisdom you can open the door to fear – you can open the door to like, questioning the things you think in your mind and you become a lot more wise.

**Teacher:** What do you think about that idea? (Student) doesn't think you would be fearful if you didn't have wisdom. It's not possible to be fearful without wisdom?

**Year 4 student:** (Student) said that wisdom opens many doors. Does it start fear or stop fear? (Further questioning and comments by students and teacher)

**Year 7 student 2:** I want to extend on Josh's idea. I think wisdom is like the key to unlock, like, fear. You have fear of the unknown – fear of that which you do not understand and knowledge takes away the cloak of misunderstanding...

The initial analysis indicates that genuine doubt creates opportunities for students to build upon each other's contributions and creates a sense of a community of inquiry where students' concerns and values can be shared and interrogated within the community. Students become invested in the establishment of a democratic community of learners within their classroom (Dewey, 1916). This forms the basis of a more democratic and caring school community. Genuine doubt arising from authentic inquiry within the classroom enables students to consider ideas from a range of perspectives and thus gain a deeper understanding of the value and significance of democracy.

## **Engaging with issues through controversy mapping in a school science context**

Anne Solli, Thomas Hillman and Åsa Mäkitalo, University of Gothenburg

Public debates of science and technoscientific innovations rely heavily on digitized information; they are available through digital media and are generative of new uncertainties in the everyday lives of citizens. In concrete terms they concern issues such as global warming, GMO, hydraulic fracturing etc. The field of science education have responded to the concern for scientific citizenship by introducing so called socioscientific issues (SSI) in school that invite students' engagement with scientific, societal, ethical and cultural perspectives on such issues (Zeidler & Nichols, 2009). For teachers who wish to engage their students in ongoing debates, it is a challenge to invite the complexity of such issues as they rely on digitized information. As students turn to the Internet, such debates take place in a mixed stream of website-genres, modalities and difference of opinion (Lemke, 2006). Their

challenge is to navigate their way through a vast amount of disparate voices, claims, arguments, insights and experiences. In this situation, ways of mapping controversies through the extraction and analysis of digital data (Venturini & Latour, 2010) may provide a means to display such information in a more condensed and readable form – a map to be used for further exploration (Venturini, 2010).

Controversy mapping has been claimed to provide alternative routes for students to engage with technoscientific issues of concern. While SSI projects typically have emphasized the exploration and appropriation of different scientific forms of reasoning and ethical considerations to support individual decision making (Sadler, 2011; Nielsen, 2013), controversy mapping sees new forms of technical mediation as the key to improved science literacy and public engagement. Whatever might be the case, we know that there is a rich variety of digital tools and applications available and that there is a need to focus on their actual use before drawing any conclusions about their implications for student learning. The precise manners in which tasks are initiated, what resources are available and how students' work will be assessed, have clear implications for their ways of engaging with such issues (Furberg & Ludvigsen, 2008; Åberg, Mäkitalo, & Säljö, 2010). This calls for empirical studies that scrutinize *how* controversy mapping with digital tools constrain and/or support students' learning about current matters of concern for citizens, which is the aim of our study.

Our conceptualization of learning as appropriation is analyzed through *mediated interaction*, which focuses the ways that semiotic means are entangled in student's sense making as material sign vehicles (Wertsch, 2007). Appropriation implies that students familiarize themselves with the mediating means that are salient in their environment and learn to use them through interaction with others and in response to local concerns. In this particular study, we explore the heterogeneity of genres and social languages (Bakhtin, 1981) that become salient in students' activities as they navigate complexity with the map as a point of departure.

Empirically we have followed two classes (grade 11 and 12) in an upper secondary school where they worked with controversy mapping as part of a project concerned with science-in-society lasting 3 weeks. The students begin by selecting a controversy, they are introduced to scraping data from the Internet using Navicrawler, and then learn to *re-present* that data in visual form using Gephi (creating a digital map of a network of actors involved in the controversy). Our data for this study consist of video recordings of two groups of students in an activity where they are to explain the controversies they are exploring to fellow students, using the maps they have created. We analyze how they negotiate meaning, relevance and reliability and handle the many voices and different accounts they encountered through their map-making.

Our preliminary analysis shows how the digital maps support the discussion by visually stabilizing the stakeholders and positions, making them publicly and jointly available for discussion. It also supports and sustains a dialogic space in which students can orient to multiple perspectives. The students engage in questioning claims of their fellow students and of stakeholders in their controversy. They also engage in justifying positions, explaining together, evaluating sources, and used the maps for understanding conflicting versions of the issue. The students also need to account for the processes of making their maps; how they were constructed and what they *re-present*. This implies that these students both negotiate and rely on these resources as vehicles for scrutinizing, reasoning and arguing. The students were challenged in appropriating the tools, but seemed to establish a space of reflection. This space provided possibilities for the students to question their own assumptions and submit themselves to the tension of conflicting viewpoints (Wegerif, 2013). We will conclude our paper by drawing on what the discussion of these students imply, in terms of fostering a young citizen agency.

## **Computer-supported deliberation about hot historical topics in a multi-ethnic context**

Baruch Schwarz and Tsafrir Goldberg, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

History began to be taught as a school discipline in Western countries from the middle of the nineteenth century only. At the time of the Spring of Nations, the newly born Nation-State needed its citizens to share common values and beliefs. The most natural candidate for commonality was the official narrative that told the story of a nation. For a long time, textbooks provided indisputable narratives from which students were expected to extract facts or interpretations. The History of the 20th century is a tremendous slap in the face of values in Western Nation-States. Except for citizens who identify with radical right wing parties, there is a general consensus on some degree of opening up to other cultures. Waves of immigration have also changed the cultural background of many schools in Western countries to include students from different countries with different cultures and values. These changes are particularly challenging for History teaching, especially in countries where conflicts are still alive (or even memories of them). In this context, educators have adopted different pedagogical approaches. Goldberg (2013) identified three pedagogical approaches that are implemented nowadays in history classrooms. The *authoritative-conventional approach* (by far the most frequent approach) presents to the student a unique narrative

that reflects the point of view of the nation-state. This approach is often presented as a way to apply a ‘melting pot’ policy for increasing shared values and beliefs among future citizens of the same country. The *critical-disciplinary approach* consists in the appropriation of the concepts, practices and reasoning skills characterizing history as an academic domain. Contextual thinking (which denies an attitude toward the past dominated by present-day attitudes and experiences), evaluation of sources, and syntheses based on multiple (and conflicting) texts, are central according to this approach. Historical sources are referred to as testimonies to be treated with circumspection. The third approach is the *empathetic-narrative approach*. It consists of organising encounters between students from groups with conflicting narratives, and encouraging them to express and listen to alternative interpretations of events. This approach is particularly suitable in countries where conflicts are still vivid, but not only in such countries. It is characterized by the absence of judgmental expressions, and of defensive reactions.

Goldberg (2013) compared the three approaches in Israel – a country involved in a conflict with respect to national identity, commitments to in-group narratives, interest in out-group perspectives and conceptions of the conflict, for a unit on modern history focusing on the 1948 war of independence between Jews and Arabs. Jews and Arabs participated in small group discussions in the study. He showed the superiority of the critical disciplinary approach and of the empathetic-narrative approach, and the inferiority of the authoritative- traditional approach. These results are even more surprising in the light of the fact that students perform poorly when invited to argue about dormant historical issues (Pontecorvo & Girardet, 1993), and that students often treated sources as information and only used the information that supported their claim (Lee & Ashby, 2000). The reasons for the productivity of progressive approaches for emotionally-charged, ethnicity-related historical controversy historical issues partly originates from meticulous argumentative design (evaluation of multiple texts, individual argumentative essay, dialectical argumentation in small groups and final essay) (Goldberg, Schwarz & Porat, 2009).

The dimension generally scrutinized in the context of group learning generally concerns the conceptual or the ideational. However, other dimensions the epistemological and the interpersonal dimensions are crucial, especially in long-term learning experiences (Schwarz & Baker, 2016). Our research shows that the approach adopted for history teaching impinges on the nature of discussions in class (teacher-led, or in small groups) is influential both to the construction of group identity and to improvement or deterioration of intergroup relations. Differences in effects of the approaches we study are salient not only in outcomes but in the quality of discussions between groups (Schwarz & Shachar, in press). We have shown that the role of emotions according to the critical-disciplinary and the empathetic-narrative approaches can often be beneficial in small-group discussions. Analysis of some discussions amongst students representing conflicting groups, who read and evaluated conflicting sources, revealed that emotions were intense but did not impair the deployment of rich argumentative moves (Schwarz & Goldberg, 2013). On the contrary, in certain cases, emotions fuels small group argumentation and does not impair clear thinking in a case where the conflict had already been settled but had left emotional scars.

Research done so far on small group emotionally-loaded discussions in History in a multicultural context has been conducted in short-term interventions. We have currently engaged in research on discussions between Arabs and Jews about controversial issues in the Modern History of the State of Israel. The on-line modality is propitious for such a context. Students typically interact in dyads in consecutive activities (evaluation of sources, preparation for debate in same ethnicity group, critical discussion, collaborative writing). Through the use of scripts that encourage a disciplinary, empathetic or authoritative approach, we manipulate the emotions of the participants. Also, in the course of the consecutive activities, we introduce historical issues for which collective memory has different levels of vividness. This setting is intended to check changes of viewpoints from epistemological deontic, conceptual and interpersonal perspectives in the long-term. If our first impressions will be confirmed, the prolonged learning experiences based on a combination of critical- disciplinary and empathetic-narrative approaches may lead to argumentative forms of deliberation, in which epistemological and intersubjective dimensions will develop positively. Such envisioned outcomes might lead the students involved in these learning experiences to be ready for the constitution of a deliberative democracy.

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